

The Art and Science of "Selling" Your Radiation Safety Program

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Abstract

- ◆ Ask any experienced practicing radiation safety professional and they will likely tell you that the ultimate success or failure of any program is contingent upon the ability to effectively “sell” its attributes. Radiation safety professionals are constantly trying to persuade, induce, convince, affect, impress, convert, discourage, or prompt actions. We must be able to “sell” ourselves to gain employment, start new initiatives, or successfully interact with regulatory agencies. Although salesmanship is an essential skill for the profession, training in this area is not normally included in our academic or continuing education curricula. To cultivate an awareness of the importance of sales and marketing skills in our profession, this presentation will serve to answer some very basic, but essential questions, such as: what are we “selling”, who are we “selling” to, and how do we go about “selling” effectively.

Speaker Biography

Dr. Robert Emery is the Executive Director of Environmental Health & Safety for the University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston, and Associate Professor of Occupational Health at the University of Texas School of Public Health. Bob has over 20 years of experience in health & safety and holds masters degrees in both health physics and environmental sciences, and a doctorate in occupational health. Bob is unique in that he possesses national board certification and registration in all of the main areas of health and safety;

- health physics [Certified Health Physicist (CHP)],
- occupational safety [Certified Safety Professional (CSP)],
- industrial hygiene [Certified Industrial Hygienist (CIH)],
- biological safety [Registered Biosafety Professional (RBP)],
- hazardous materials management [Certified Hazardous Materials Manager (CHMM)]
- risk management [Associate in Risk Management (ARM)].

He is an active educator and the author of many peer-reviewed articles on practical health and safety topics. He makes frequent presentations on such issues on both the local and national level.

What Do We Mean by "Sell"?

- ◆ Safety must constantly
 - ◆ persuade
 - ◆ induce
 - ◆ convince
 - ◆ affect
 - ◆ impress
 - ◆ covert
 - ◆ discourage
 - ◆ or prompt actions



Why is "Selling" Important

- ◆ "Everyone lives by selling something"
 - ◆ - *Robert Louis Stevenson*
- ◆ "Few people at the beginning of the 19th century needed an adman to tell them what they wanted"
 - ◆ - *J.K. Galbraith*

What Are We "Selling"?

- ◆ Our product line includes:
 - ◆ safety
 - ◆ health and well being
 - ◆ asset protection
 - ◆ compliance
- ◆ But wait, there's more.....



What Are We "Selling"? (cont.)



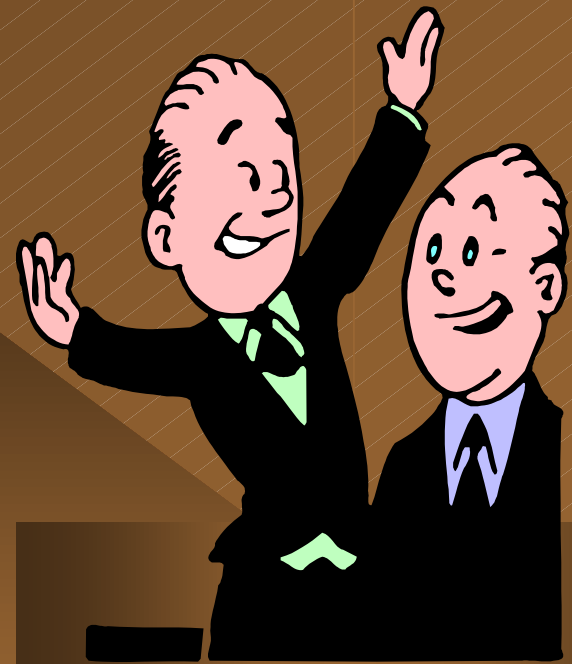
- ◆ Send before midnight, and you also get....
 - ◆ protection of image and reputation
 - ◆ reduced down time
 - ◆ reduced errors rates
 - ◆ improved quality
 - ◆ improved productivity
 - ◆ adherence to good practices
 - ◆ *esprit de corps*

A Key “Selling” Point!

- ◆ Because we may be selling all or only one of these features.....
- ◆ Recognize that the term “safety” can mean different things to different people
- ◆ It is critically important to ensure that both parties reach mutual agreement on the definition of “safety”
- ◆ As we’ll see, definition will likely vary with each party

Who Are We “Selling” To?

- ◆ Internally
 - ◆ upper management
 - ◆ middle management
 - ◆ line workers
- ◆ Externally
 - ◆ investors and stakeholders
 - ◆ regulatory agencies
 - ◆ media
 - ◆ public
- ◆ “Whose bread I eat, his song I sing” *German proverb*



What "Sales" Methods Do We Use?

- ◆ door to door
- ◆ cold calls
- ◆ desired meetings
- ◆ forced meetings
- ◆ written and oral advertisements
- ◆ actions

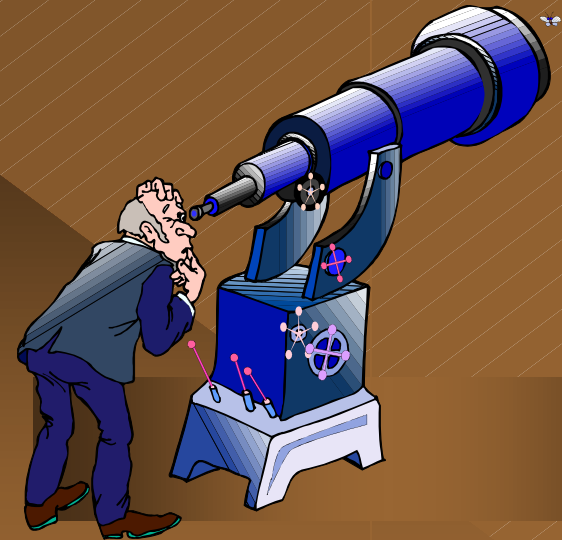


What "Sales" Method is Appropriate?

- ◆ Depends on who you're selling to...
 - ◆ upper management:
 - ◆ quantify, cost benefit
 - ◆ middle management:
 - ◆ how will it help me meet my targets?
 - ◆ line workers:
 - ◆ how will it benefit me?

"Selling" up the Reporting Line

- ◆ How might the justification of your request change if you report on a daily basis to:
 - ◆ Operations
 - ◆ Human resources
 - ◆ Legal
 - ◆ Technical
 - ◆ Administration
 - ◆ Financial
 - ◆ CEO/President



"Selling" to Both Sides of the Safety Balance

◆ The Business Side

- ◆ Keeping productivity and profits up
- ◆ Keeping costs down
- ◆ Maintaining compliance with applicable regulations and standards

◆ The Human Side

- ◆ Staying healthy
- ◆ Not getting injured or ill
- ◆ Being able to go home each day to loved ones
- ◆ And some sort of bonus doesn't hurt!

Example: Source Substitution Program

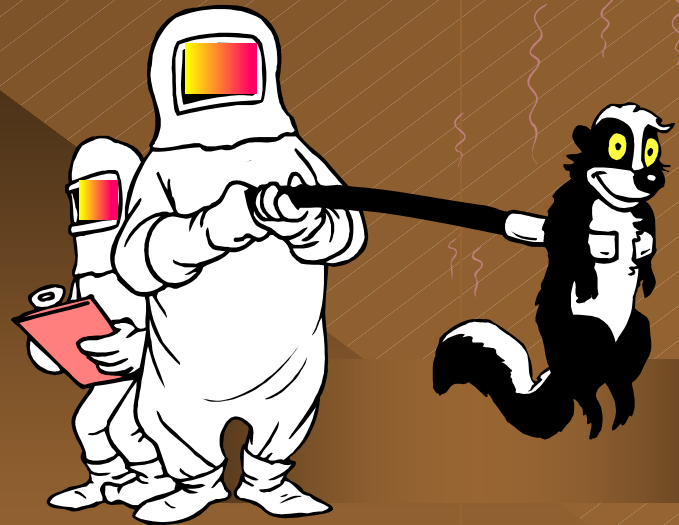
- ◆ Upper managers
 - ◆ describe the cost of existing source use
 - ◆ reflect total cost, implementation and maintenance
 - ◆ compliance issues
- ◆ Middle management
 - ◆ doesn't interfere with production
 - ◆ will enhance production
 - ◆ implemented in a way that won't affect production or irritate workers
- ◆ Line workers
 - ◆ comfort, ease of use, simple changes to process, cool colors, the thing actually works!
- ◆ Make the message match the recipient!

How Do We "Sell" Effectively?

- ◆ Understand client needs and desires
- ◆ Communicate succinctly and in terms the client understands and appreciates
- ◆ Quantify and justify everything
- ◆ Be an active listener
- ◆ Constantly solicit feedback from all sources

Importance of Feedback

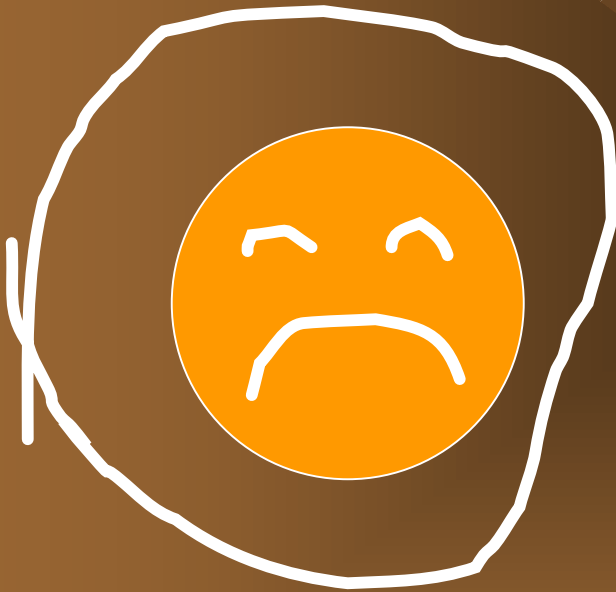
- ◆ Receive it and give it!
- ◆ It's all in the delivery



Soliciting Client Feedback



Soliciting Client Feedback



Soliciting Client Feedback



Service Expectation Versus Delivery

- ◆ Adaptation of SERVQUAL tool
- ◆ Asks customers about characteristics of “excellent” programs
- ◆ Questions centered around five service characteristics shown to be concerns of customers:
 - ◆ Tangibles
 - ◆ Reliability
 - ◆ Responsiveness
 - ◆ Assurance
 - ◆ Empathy
- ◆ Then asks same questions about your program – “how are we meeting your expectations?”

Figure 1. UTHSCH laboratory personnel rating of the importance of certain service characteristics of "excellent" environmental health & safety programs, compared to their rating of the level of service currently being provided by UTHSCH EH&S.

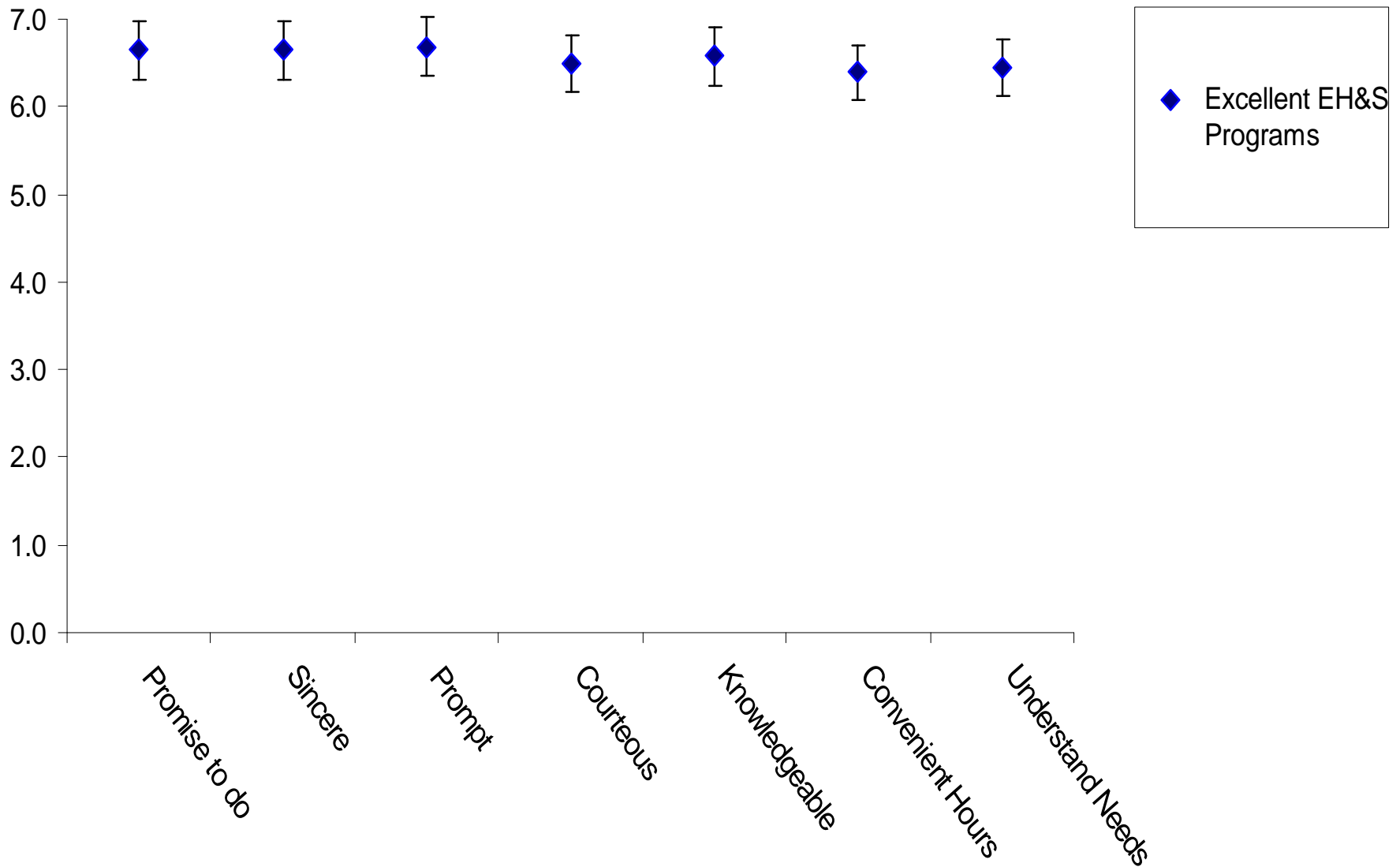
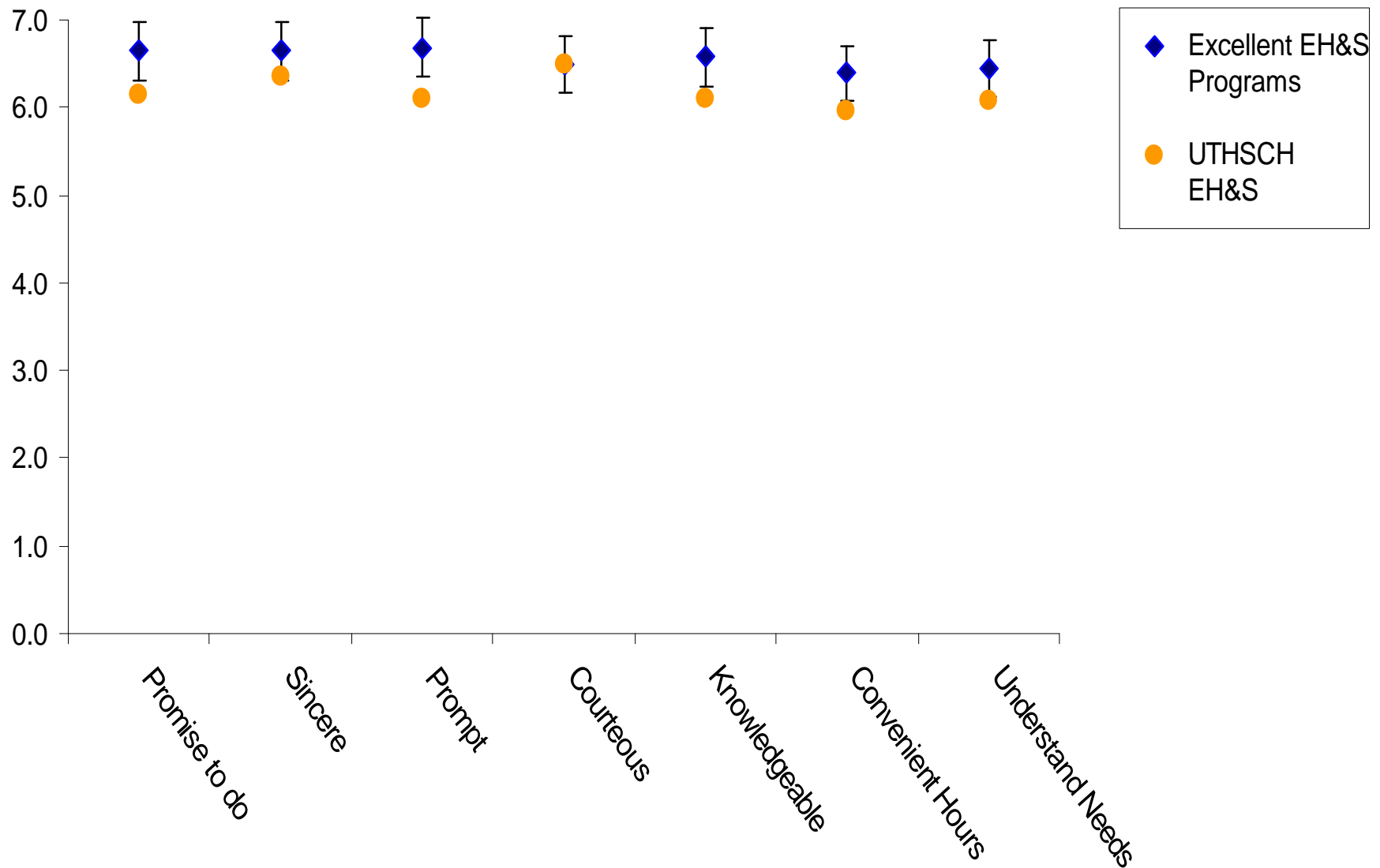
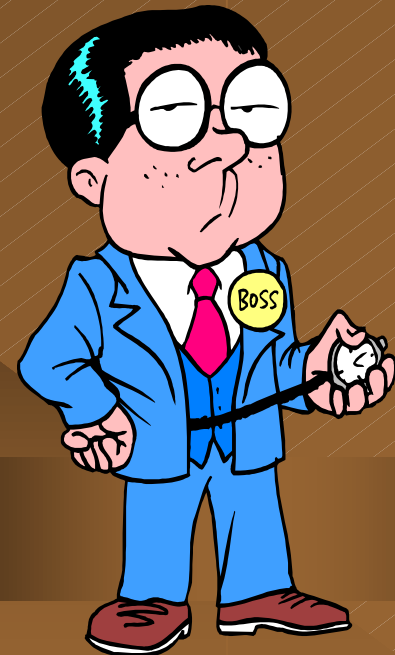


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Communicating With Upper Management

- ◆ Brevity versus incompleteness
- ◆ Provide references: historical or regulatory
- ◆ Don't assume they remember, and don't berate when they don't
- ◆ Use units they understand - "how many boats do we have to make to cover this loss"
- ◆ Respect their time



Examples of Facts Management (and You) Would Benefit From Knowing

- ◆ “80% of all external biochemical research funded by the NIH is dependent on radiation”
 - ◆ What portion of your funding comes from NIH?
 - ◆ What portion of those investigators are users of radiation sources?
- ◆ “90% of all new drugs approved by the FDA require radionuclide-based tests”
 - ◆ Is this an essential part of your business?
- ◆ Trends in compliance – areas of focus?

from: Mayo, R.M. Introduction to Nuclear Concepts for Engineers,
American Nuclear Society, LaGrange Park, Ill 1998

Remember “Selling” Isn’t Just Facts

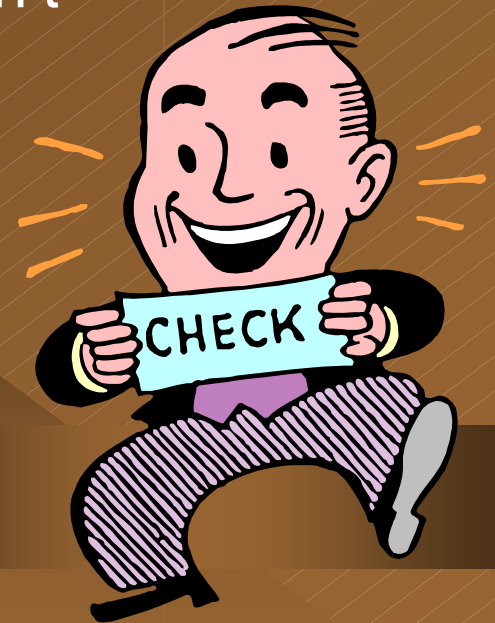
- ◆ Despite the overwhelming evidence, how many of us “health and safety professionals”
 - ◆ Drive over the speed limit?
 - ◆ Smoke?
 - ◆ Eat fatty foods?
 - ◆ Drink alcohol?
 - ◆ Exercise 20 minutes a day?
- ◆ Why haven’t we “bought” it?

"Selling" With Budgets

- ◆ Accounting paints a landscape picture with numbers rather than colors
- ◆ Make sure your methods blend with the décor
- ◆ Demonstrating the creation of value a must - regardless of "for profit" or "not for profit"
- ◆ Prioritize for management: urgent, essential economically desirable, desirable
- ◆ Include contingencies to minimize surprises
- ◆ Justification and payback

"Selling" Safety Through Incentive Programs

- ◆ The wrong way
 - ◆ specific behavior not identified, e.g. "don't get exposed"
- ◆ The right way
 - ◆ specific behavior identified and achievable
 - ◆ no penalty for failure
 - ◆ don't pit one against the other
 - ◆ better for many to receive small awards than few to receive one big one.



"Selling" With Effective Presentations

- ◆ Effective presentation skills greatly add to program and personal creditability
- ◆ Actively seek opportunities to speak - practice makes perfect
- ◆ Find out about the audience and what they want to know - keep it simple
- ◆ Use visuals, props, displays
- ◆ Remember - No one ever complained about getting out early!

"Selling" With Written Communications

- ◆ Identify the type of recipient: analyzers, people pleasers, dreamers or doers
- ◆ Use action words, energetic, simple language
- ◆ Write in the active voice
- ◆ Limit paragraphs to 4-6 sentences
- ◆ Respect the readers time -short things get read more often!
- ◆ Remember – written correspondence results in fixed, reproducible images that can have long-lasting effects



Poor Example

TO: Staff
FROM: Abby
RE: Safety
DATE: Monday

Well, it has finally come to our attention that sometimes people feel a little bit unsafe walking to and from their cars in that dimly lit parking lot when its dark. What you need to do if you feel unsafe in the dark is call a gaurd to walk to your car with you. This should take care of the problem...

Improved Version

TO: All Laboratory Personnel
FROM: Abby Mitchell, Lab Manager
RE: Parking Lot Safety After Dark
DATE: July 3, 2001

In response to recent employee concerns regarding personal safety in Parking Lot A, the lighting system has been upgraded and the security guards have been instructed to escort

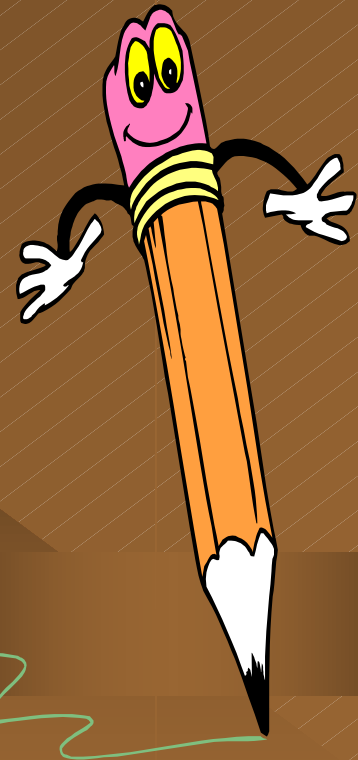
from: Lemery, LD *Laboratory Medicine* 26(7)452-458

Watch Out for Unintended Messages

- ◆ This needs minor revision
- ◆ I never got around to reading this
- ◆ This won't be on the test
- ◆ Nap time
- ◆ Attendance is required and will count towards your grade
- ◆ I'm so boring that you wouldn't show up otherwise
- ◆ Don't write on the test sheet
- ◆ I'm too lazy to change each semester
- ◆ We'll be spending a fair amount of time on this important topic
- ◆ This was my dissertation
- ◆ Please note this is the last day to withdrawal
- ◆ The midterm is a killer

"Selling" Intangibles

- ◆ Quantifying "goodwill value"
- ◆ $\text{Market value} - \text{total asset value} = \text{goodwill value}$
- ◆ Measure and display intangibles such as service, customer satisfaction, reputation, trust



"Selling" Yourself

- ◆ Credentials, reputation, appearance
- ◆ Presentations
- ◆ Making yourself known
- ◆ Writing and publishing
- ◆ Professional involvement and networking
- ◆ Are you a valued reference?



Guaranteed to Kill the "Sale"

- ◆ Lies
- ◆ Misinformation or garbled messages
- ◆ Consistently lengthy communications
- ◆ Technical arrogance
- ◆ Threats
- ◆ Not following through



It's Really People Skills....

- ◆ “The ability to deal with people is as purchasable a commodity as sugar or coffee. And I pay more for that ability than any other under the sun.”

◆ *John D. Rockefeller*

And Knowing When to Say When...

- ◆ “His shortcoming was his long staying”
 - ◆ *Lewis Lewisohn*

Summary

- ◆ The ability to effectively “sell” safety is as important to professional success as technical competence
- ◆ The sales method must be matched to the target audience
- ◆ Effective and efficient communication skills, both written and oral, are a must - and must be practiced
- ◆ If using incentive programs - use judiciously
- ◆ Capture and display your program’s intangibles
- ◆ Avoid the “sale” killers
- ◆ Remember to sell yourself too!
- ◆ The good news - its easy to believe in our product!